

REMARKS / DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Claims 2, 5, 7-9, and 12-14 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 6, and 10 are canceled herein.

The Office action rejects claims 1-2, 6-7, 9-10, and 12-13 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Pouffe (USP 6,466,979). The applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, but in the interest of securing a patent for this invention, have canceled claims and amended the pending claims to place them in condition for allowance. The applicants reserve the right to pursue the original claims in a continuation application.

The Office action indicates that claims 5 and 8 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 5 and 8 are correspondingly amended herein, and claims 2, 7, 12, and 13 are amended to be dependent upon these claims.

Claim 9 is amended to include the limitation corresponding to the distinguishing features of claims 5 and 8, and claim 14 is dependent upon claim 9. The applicants respectfully request the Examiner's withdrawal of the rejection of claims 9 and 14 based on at least the same reasons that claims 5 and 8 have been found allowable.

In view of the foregoing, the applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections of record, allow all the pending claims, and find the application to be in condition for allowance. If any points remain in issue that may best be resolved through a personal or telephonic interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

/Robert M. McDermott/
Robert M. McDermott, Attorney
Registration Number 41,508
patents@lawyer.com

1824 Federal Farm Road
Montross, VA 22520
Phone: 804-493-0707
Fax: 215-243-7525